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SUMMARY

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FAR EAST

1. "Aerial no-man's land" reported over northwestern Korea:

The inability of UN medium bombers to venture north of the Chongchon River in northwestern Korea in daylight hours is cited by the Far East Command as demonstrating the loss of UN air superiority in this area.

The Far East Command states, however, that the "relative freedom of action" enjoyed by high-performance UN jet aircraft over northwestern Korea has in turn prevented the Communists from achieving effective air superiority, in effect establishing an "aerial no-man's land."

Comment: Loss of air superiority north of the Chongchon River has caused the UN to resort to night medium bomber and fighter-bomber missions in an attempt to continue the neutralization of the airfields at Taechon, Namsi and Saamchan. The Communists are continuing to augment their antiaircraft defenses at these fields, and considerable construction work continues in the repair and extension of runways.


2. Burmese Communists and Karen insurgents reportedly sign agreement:

The US Charge in Rangoon was told by the British Ambassador that the Karen insurgents in the Irrawaddy Delta have just signed an agreement to cooperate with the Burmese Communist Party.

Comment: If this report is correct, Communist capabilities in Burma will have been greatly increased at a critical moment. Coordinated action by the numerous Karen rebels in the rice-rich delta area of southern Burma would facilitate the achievement of the Burmese Communists' current objective -- control of northern Burma, including territory adjacent to Communist China.

The British Foreign Office regards the situation in Burma with considerable concern and has recently suggested a joint American-British effort to assist the Burmese Government in reaching a settlement with the Karens. The American and British Embassies in Rangoon, however, believe such an approach unwise, citing extreme Burmese sensitivity to the Karen insurgency as reflected in Premier Thakin Nu's 29 October statement that Burma would not accept mediation.

3. De Lattre threatens to resign:

 General de Lattre, in a conversation with US Minister Heath, detailed a long list of disgraceful activities in which Premier Huu was engaged. The General, for the first time since his arrival in Indochina, seemed tired and depressed and said that he was sacrificing his health in remaining there. He stated that, if he "had any real difficulties" with Huu, he would offer his resignation as High Commissioner and publicly expose the intolerable inefficiency and corruption of the Huu government. 25X1

Comment: This is the first time that De Lattre is known to have considered resigning or evidenced any lack of self-confidence in dealing with problems in Indochina. Unless his health has been more severely strained than has been reported, it is not believed that he will resign at this time.

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WESTERN EUROPE

8. USSR apparently seeking four-power discussion of Berlin trade problems:

East German trade officials have told their West German counterparts that they are now forbidden by the Soviet authorities to discuss restrictions on West Berlin trade. The East Germans admit that this marks a definite change in the Soviet position from the time the interzonal trade agreement was signed on 20 September. They declare that the restrictions can now be discussed only on four-power level.

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The Western Allies are prepared to open trade discussions with the Soviet authorities, but only after suspension of the interzonal trade agreement, a step on which Chancellor Adenauer's views are awaited. West Berlin officials, claiming that economic difficulties are beginning to be evident in Berlin, believe that immediate steps should be taken to increase the airlift of exports. Meanwhile, confirmation has been received that the Rothensee canal lock in East Germany has been opened, removing one of the obstacles to barge traffic from Berlin.

Comment: At the signing of the interzonal trade agreement, the East Germans made an oral pledge that certain devices to harass Berlin trade would be abandoned. Prior to this time, they honored this promise only to the extent of reducing the tax on truck traffic to Berlin. If the Soviet authorities have now denied the East Germans any jurisdiction over trade restriction, the purpose might be to give the USSR a free hand to use the restrictions as one of several levers to impede progress toward the integration of Germany into the West, and particularly to force four-power negotiations on this issue.

The Rothensee canal lock, now open for the first time since last January, will not be of much immediate use to the West, as the canal is normally closed because of ice by mid-December.